

**JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2003
VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL RICHMOND, VA
MINUTES**

ATTENDING:

Jim Aucoin
Johnnie Collins Jr.
John D. Edgerton
Dr. Paul Richard Fink
Michael C. Hulsey
James F. Jones, Jr.
Daniel T. Miller, Chairman
Cornelius T. O'Neil
R. Goodwin Sacra

Mel Drisko, Member of Board of Veterans Services
John McAnaw, Virginia Department of Veterans of Foreign Wars

Jon Mangis, Commissioner
Bert Boyd, Chief Deputy Commissioner
Don Ferguson, Assistant Attorney General
Bonnie Giese, Financial Manager, Department of Veterans Services
Geneva Claybrook, Executive Services Manager, Department of Veterans Services

CALL TO ORDER:

Dan Miller called the meeting to order and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. He called the roll and it was decided that there was a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Connie O'Neill noted he addressed the legislative agenda for the American Legion at the last meeting, and it was not mentioned in the minutes. He asked that this be added to the minutes and that members receive a hard copy. (See Attached)

MOTION: John Edgerton moved that the minutes of the November 10, 2003 meeting be approved as written, with the noted correction. Johnnie Collins seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

REVIEW OF REVISED BY-LAWS:

MOTION: John Edgerton moved that the revised By-Laws be approved as written. James Jones, Jr. seconded the motion and it passed. John McAnaw abstained.

There was further discussion regarding the removal of the phrase “For God and Country”. Don Ferguson, Assistant Attorney General stated that it was due to the Council conducting State business and the Council could be open to litigation. . The phrase “faith in our Creator” was discussed. Mr. Ferguson advised his legal advice to the Council that it did not belong in a public document; however, Mr. McAnaw recommended that the phrase “faith in our Creator” remain in the By-laws. John Edgerton agreed and a vote was taken. It was unanimous that the phrase remains in the By-Laws. Mr. Ferguson advised that the By-Laws be made available to the general public.

APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS:

Connie O’Neill was appointed Legislative Officer, and accepted the appointment. Mr. O’Neill reviewed his background with The American Legion as Adjutant and Legislative Chairman for the American Legion. He added he would be representing the Joint Leadership Council and will begin with a legislative agenda for the JLC, representing all organizations.

Dr. Paul Fink was appointed Chaplain, and accepted. He reviewed for the Council his background, adding he had been a minister for 63 years.

It was agreed that there was no need for a Parliamentarian, Secretary. Hopefully Mr. Mangis will get a good deal for him on the tickets. There was ratification of the two appointments.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Dan Miller began a discussion of the Development of Veterans Outreach Program. He noted that Title 38 of the Code of Virginia states they are restricted to serving Veterans. They are located at the Department of Commerce in Virginia Employment Commission; however, they are not budgeted by the VEC. The issue is that each has a maximum employment level and currently there are twelve open positions and there is \$360,000 to support these positions, i.e., wages, benefits, etc. If the positions are not filled the Department of Labor can recapture the money impacting the economy because the pay and benefits are not circulating in the Commonwealth. There are approximately 1200 Veterans who could be put to work, which would mean \$30,000,000 in wages Veterans would earn. This is a loss to the Commonwealth of approximately \$70,000,000. Dan Miller recommended a motion be made to address the issues.

MOTION: John Edgerton moved to exclude DVOP/LVER from a Maximum Employment Level at the Virginia Employment Commission, so when there is a vacancy it can be filled immediately.

A discussion ensued on how to address the matter appropriately. The JLC makes recommendations to the OVS and the Board of Veterans Services. The Commissioner goes directly to the Secretary of Commerce, through the budget process and Don Ferguson addresses it through appropriation. It was recommended that the Adjutant

General of the National Guard Association be contacted, since he has gone through the process as Chief of Staff.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES REPORT – Commissioner Jon Mangis

Mr. Mangis spoke to the issue of aiding Veterans coming out of uniform, layoffs, etc. He remarked the men/women should have help available to them with field offices located throughout the state.

He recognized Paul Galanti, Chair of the Sub Committee on Benefits and Roger Sullivan, Military Order of the Purple Heart and Virginia Veterans Coalition.

Mr. Mangis reviewed his schedule, stating he had been to the Care Center and the Roanoke office; however, being tied up with the budget has been unable to visit the other field offices. He asked for dates of State conventions and deadlines on VSO newsletters. Mel Drisko commented that his organization could provide space for a column in their newsletter for words from the Commissioner until the Department of Veterans Services publishes a newsletter.

He said he sees the Joint Leadership Council as an excellent group, voicing their concerns to the Board and Foundation, as well as a great help during legislation. Additionally, he asked that he be notified of all meetings scheduled between now and June to help him attend the majority of the State Conventions.

Connie O'Neill presented the American Legion Legislative Agenda and reviewed it for the Council, addressing the second Care Center. (See Attached) The VFW 's Agenda was presented by John McAnaw, which included DVOP/LVER, a study of the resolution for the second Care Center and a third Care Center and a third Cemetery. Also, he discussed authorization for college in-state tuition for active duty personnel.

The MOOA Agenda was presented by Mel Drisko including Department of Veterans Services restored staff cuts, Virginia War Memorial security guards, Virginia Veterans Care Center, in-state tuition for active duty personnel and dependents and State income tax exemptions for Military releases. Also, continue monitoring the second Care Center's construction.

The issue of a budget figure restoring the Department of Veterans Services was discussed. Memos will be sent to Jon Mangis.

PRESENTATION OF FLAG:

Dr. Paul Richard Fink presented a U.S. Navy Cruiser Sailors Association flag to the War Memorial. Jon Hatfield, Executive Director accepted the flag on behalf of the Memorial.

NEXT MEETING DATE: – March 16, 2004 – 1:00 Meeting to recap legislative progress.

PUBLIC COMMENT: - Paul Gallanti noted a high priority should be set to help Jon Mangis, Commissioner gain permission to hire a part-time assistant.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.